THE Chriſtian Hiſtory;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival of Religion in *Great Britain*, *America*, &c.

Saturday JUNE 9. 1744. § Nº. 66.

An Account of the Revival of Religion at LYME *East Pariſh in* Connecticut, *about* 120 *Miles South West of* Boſton, *in a Letter from the Rev. Mr.* George Griſwold *Paſtor of the Church there, to the Rev. Mr.* Prince.

Rev. Sir, LYME *East Pariſh April* 3. 1744.

ACcording to your Deſire I ſhall endeavour to give you a ſhort but true and juſt Account of the *wonderful Work* of GOD's *Grace in this Pariſh*; which conſiſts of betwixt 60 and 70 *Families*, leaving out the *Churchmen* and *Baptiſts*.

We as well as the reſt of the Country were grown very careleſs and ſtupid in Matters of Religion: but little of the Life and *Power* of Godlineſs was to be obſerved among us; yea as to ſundry, the *Form* was wanting. And I had Reaſon to fear *Family* and *ſecret Prayer* was neglected by too many. Many were very ſlack in attending the preaching of the Word on Sabbath and other Times: The Communion was thin; the World and the Follies and Vanities proſecuted; beſides open Sins and Vices that ſome run into: there was but little of good Diſcourſe to be obſerved on the *Lord's Day*.

Thus Things run, till the Rev. Mr. *Whitefield* came into the Country, and People began to talk of Religion and the beſt Things; but it did not ſeem to be with a feeling Senſe of it; and I don't know of any great Concern about the State of their Souls, but in *three* Perſons who belonged to this Place at that Time, which I hope were converted in the *latter End* of the Year 1740 or the *Beginning* of the Year 1741, before the remarkable Concern began among us.

It was obſerved, that in the hard *Winter* 1740, 1. there ſeem'd to be a greater Seriouſneſs and Thoughtfulneſs than uſual in the Minds of People about the State of their Souls.

This *Winter* the Rev. Mr. *Gilbert Tennent* went to the *Eaſtward*; and on his return, he preached two excellent Sermons in *this Place April* 1. 1741. and the People of *this Pariſh* came generally together, and many from other Places. Theſe Sermons were bleſs'd to a great (if not a general) *Awakening* among my People; and *two* or *three* were *deeply* wounded :--- ſo that they plainly diſcover'd it in their Looks and Behaviour; and the Concern ſpread and increaſed, and was viſible in the Face of the Congregation on the Lord's Days and other Times of publick Worſhip; and ſome were diſtreſſed that they were ſo ſtupid as not to be concerned. The Concern ſpread and increaſed apace, and Perſons were ſolicitous *what they ſhould do to be ſaved:* and *Evening religious Meetings* were ſet up.

The 14th of *April* in the Evening, the Rev. Mr. *Parſons* Miniſter of the *firſt Pariſh* in this Town preached at one of the Evening Meetings at a private Houſe in this Place. The Word fell with great Power on ſundry, who were deeply wounded under a Senſe of *Sin* and *divine Wrath*. Some had Fits, ſome fainted; and it was obſervable, that GOD made uſe of the Concern in ſome to create a Concern in others: and ſome that did not appear much concerned when the publick Exerciſe was ended; yet ſeeing others diſtreſſed, fell into deep Diſtreſs under a Conviction of *Sin* and the Senſe of *divine Wrath* due to them. Some Hours were ſpent in praying with and counſelling the diſtreſſed; and cautioning them that they did not grow careleſs as to the State of their Souls, and to watch againſt the Temptations of the Devil; and to ſeek earneſtly to GOD to convince, humble and convert them. After this, *Cryings out* at the preaching of the Word were frequent.

Theſe Things being the firſt that had been ſo remarkable in any Town or Pariſh near us, and were much talked of; and many Perſons from other Places came to ſee and hear, and differing were PerſonsApprehenſions of it; ſome taking it for a Work of the DIVINE SPIRIT; others ſuſpending their Judgments: very few if any at this Time would ſay that they believed it to be a deluſive Spirit.

From the firſt Appearance of it among us I was perſwaded, that *as to the Subſtance* of it, it was *the Work* of GOD, though accompanied with ſome unuſual Circumſtances.

1. Becauſe

1. Becauſe the diſtreſſed Perſons expreſſed the ſame *Conviction of Sin* and *Senſe* of the *Wrath* of GOD, that I expected they would do if that GOD came to work ſavingly on them by the HOLY SPIRIT. And as *Convictions* were wont when in a lower Degree to produce Tears from the Eyes and Sadneſs in the Countenance; I was ſatisfied that if GOD gave a clear Diſcovery of *Sin* and *his Wrath*, it would have this Effect to cauſe Crying out, Fainting and Fits.

2. Becauſe this Concern put Perſons on ſeeking after and inquiring *what they ſhould do to be ſaved*; the ſame Thing that *genuine Convictions* of the SPIRIT of GOD were wont to do.

3. It ſtirred them up to attend the *Means* of *Converſion*; as *reading* GOD's *Word*, *hearing* it *preached*, and *Prayer*; and *other Reaſons* that might be offered, but I forbear; becauſe my Deſign is to give a *brief Account of the Work*, rather than now to confirm it to be a glorious Work of the SPIRIT of GOD.

One Thing remarkable was; that ſoon after this, there was a great Concern at a private Houſe, among about *ten* Perſons, where there had been no preaching, praying, or any thing of that Nature. And as I was riding by, I was called in to pray with and to counſel them; and ſome that came in to ſee them were ſtruck under *Conviction*, and the *moſt* of theſe Perſons were ſoon after *hopefully converted*.

Upon the religious Concern breaking out ſo powerfully among us, *weekly Lectures* were ſet up; and ſundry *neighbouring Miniſters* came and preached to *crowded Aſſemblies*: and Perſons ſeemed glad to have Opportunities to hear the Word preached: and *Evening Lectures*, and *other religious Meetings*, were frequent. Now Out-cries, Fainting and Fits were oft in Meetings; though the *greater Part* of them that I hope experienced a ſaving Change did not make any Out-cries; nor did they faint or have Fits under the divine Influences of the HOLY SPIRIT.

The Work went on and at the latter End of *April*, *May*, and *June*, I had Reaſon to hope about *forty Perſons* experienced a ſaving Change.

Now Perſons *Converſation* at all Seaſons, but eſpecially on the Lord's Day, was about *Religion* and the *Concerns of their Souls*; tho' they did not neglect and throw by their worldly Buſineſs; but generally the Labour went on as well as ever.

Some from the Depth of their Concern were for a ſhort Time taken off their Labour, tho' not many Days.

Now the greater Part of the People ſeemed ſeriouſly to mind and diſcourſe about GOD, CHRIST, and *heavenly Things*. Now it was frequent to ſee and hear *young Ones* converſing with Pleaſure about the eternal *Concerns of their Souls* and *their Saviour*; who but a few Weeks before were ſerving their *youthful Luſts* & *Vanities*. *Great* was the *viſible Change* that was among us. Some that were *Church Members before* and hoped they were converted, were thrown off their Hopes, and 'tis hopeful have been led to build on JESUS CHRIST received by Faith. Some that it is hopeful were *converted before*, have been much inlightened, inlivened and comforted.

And as the *Law-Work* in the Heart in theſe Days hath been more deep & ſharp than uſual heretofore; ſo generally Perſons have ſooner paſſed through it; and when they have received Comfort, their Joys have for the moſt Part been higher than formerly Perſons had. I have often obſerved Perſons in Diſtreſs, greatly afraid that they ſhould take up with a falſe Hope, and ſo be eternally undone. And I have ſometimes obſerved when Perſons have hopefully had a diſcovery of the *Grace* of GOD in CHRIST, that they have ſaid, they ſaw ſuch Glory, ſuch Excellency and Beauty in JESUS CHRIST, that they could not expreſs it; and their Hearts have ſeemed to be raiſed up in a Flame of Love to JESUS CHRIST.

The high Experience of many in this Day of Grace, hath cauſed ſundry that were looked on as good Chriſtians to queſtion their own Eſtate; and have thereby been put on a *more careful Examination* of themſelves.

It hath been frequent for Perſons to be in great *Diſtreſs* for *others*, ſo as to be overcome thereby. Many have had ſuch Diſcoveries of the Love of GOD and CHRIST, as to be overcome, and to looſe their bodily Strength thereby: which I think was obſerved to *begin* toward the *latter End* of *July* 1741. After which, ſometimes in publick, but more eſpecially in private Meetings, this hath been *frequent*, not only in Perſons hopefully converted ſince this remarkable religious Concern, but in thoſe that are ſuppoſed to have been formerly converted.

Though the Work hath been chiefly among *younger People*, yet ſome of *all Ages* have been hopefully wro't upon.

Sundry

Sundry *Children* ſeemed greatly moved, and ſome hopefully converted, and continue to give hopeful Signs of a real Change.

From the *firſt* of *April* 1741, for ſome Months ſeldom a Sermon was preached here but there was *ſome viſible Effect* of it either in Perſons Crying-out, under a Senſe of Sin and divine Wrath, or overcome with a Senſe of the Love of GOD and CHRIST.

Perſons long overcome with a Senſe of the Love of GOD, ſo as to have their bodily Strength taken away, has been a great ſtumbling to ſome. They could not ſee through ſuch great Joys they never had felt, and were ready to think it was not of GOD.

And indeed to ſay, there was not any *falſe Joy*, I can't; but I am perſwaded from the Account that ſundry have given me as the Spring of their Joy, that they have been wonderfully filled with the *Love* of GOD, and have had *Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*.

Since the remarkable Concern, there hath been admitted into the *Communion* of the Church here, *viz.*

		Engliſh.	
April 26.	1741,	3	
May 3.		2	
May 24.		1	
July 5.		32	
Sept. 6.		20	
Nov. 1.		11	*Indians* admitted into the Church.
Jan. 3.	1741,2.	8	
March 7.		8	2
May 12.		1	
June 6.		1	
June 20.		3	
July 18.			5
Sept. 5.			1
Nov. 7.			1
Jan. 16.	1742,3.	4	
Mar. 13.		3	2
Mar. 27.			1
May 8.		2	1.
Jan. 1.	1743,4.	1	
Engliſh		100.	*Indians* 13.

And

And all theſe, except two or three, give hopeful Signs of a *ſaving Work* of GOD's SPIRIT on their Hearts; and thoſe two or three ſeriouſly profeſſed they believed it to be their Duty to come to the *Lord's Supper*; and in this as well as other Ordinances to wait on GOD for ſaving Grace; and I did not think proper to deny them, though they did not give me a ſatisfying Account of a ſaving Work wrought in them.

About *four* or *five* of the abovemention'd that have been admitted into the Church here, lived in the Corner of a neighbouring Pariſh, and much more convenient to attend the Worſhip here than in their own Pariſh. And there are *ſome* that have given an *hopeful Account* of a *ſaving Change* that as yet are *not joined with any Church*.

So that *beſides* the *Indians*, I think I may charitably hope about *one Hundred* Souls in this ſmall Place have been ſavingly wrought upon in *this extraordinary Outpouring of the* DIVINE SPIRIT. A Mercy for which GOD be adored.

Sometime about the *latter End* of *Auguſt* 1741, to the *Beginning* of *Winter*, the Work of *Conviction* ceaſed in a great Meaſure; and in *December* it much revived again, and *ſundry* were *hopefully converted* and Saints edified. Indeed the Work has not been ſo powerful at any Time as it was the *firſt three Months* after it began ſo remarkably *April* 1741.

Among them that have been looked on as hopefully converted and joined with theChurch, *five* have gone over to the *Baptiſt*, and the moral Conduct of *two* or *three* other renders their Converſion doubtful.

I have all along taken Care to *caution* Perſons againſt *laying Weight* on *Crying-out*, Fainting, and Fits, as Signs or Marks of Converſion. Converſion may be and often is without them; and People have been put in Mind, that *Extaſies* of *Joy*, conſider'd in themſelves, are not Evidences of a ſaving Change; and have been taught that *true* CONVERSION is *an inward Work of the* SPIRIT *of* GOD, *turning the Sinner from Darkneſs to Light, from Satan to* GOD, *and from Sin to Holineſs: it brings the Heart to embrace* JESUS CHRIST: and if theſe Things are not wrought in a Perſon, he is not converted, whatever Diſtreſs or Joy he may have had.

The great Impreſſion that divine Things ſeemed to have on Perſons Minds ſo as to engroſs all their Converſation, ſeems to be much abated.

I

I don't know that I have Reaſon to think one Soul hath been converted in this Place for more than *a Year* paſt. Thoſe that I have Reaſon to fear are unconverted, ſeem to be ſtupid and unaffected. And ſome of them to have *loſt the Concern* that they had when the remarkable Concern firſt came among us. And the *Saints* are not ſo often filled with divine Light and Joy as was common about two Years paſt. So that the Work ſeems to be declining, tho' Means are uſed to prevent it.

Weekly Lectures and *religious Meetings* are kept up in the Pariſh; but People don't flock to them as they did *two Years and an half* ago. I preach and get ſome of *my Brethren in the Miniſtry* to preach in ſome Part of the Pariſh *once*, *twice*, or ſometimes *thrice* in *a Week*.

The *Intermiſſion* between the publick Exerciſes on the *Lord's Days* are generally filled up with *Praying*, *Singing*, and *Reading*.

There hath been but little of Enthuſiaſm & Extravagancy among us. I have Reaſon to bleſs GOD, that he hath ſo much preſerved the People of my Charge from Extravagancies. I don't know of any of my People that are diſpoſed to forſake the *written Word* of GOD to follow Impulſes and Impreſſions.

We have had no Seperations and Diviſions, neither do this People approve of or encourage them that I know of; tho' they have been diſpoſed to think *charitably* of ſome that in other Places have ſeperated.

We have had very few that have openly oppoſed or ſpoke againſt the Work that hath been among us, except it be Perſons of *other Perſwaſions*.

Here it may not be amiſs to give a ſhort Account of a *young Man* that belonged to this Pariſh, and *died* here *laſt Auguſt*. He was one that was hopefully converted in the Year 1741. He appeared for ſome Time after his Converſion very much engaged about Religion; & then by Degrees ſeemed to grow more cold and indifferent: but nothing inconſiſtent with Grace appeared in him. Sometime in *Auguſt laſt* he was taken ſick: great was the Diſtreſs of his Mind: He bitterly bewailed that he had ſo much forſaken GOD. Before his Death the Lord was pleaſed to lift up the Light of his Countenance upon him; great was the Joy of his Heart in the LORD. He ſent for many of his Acquaintance; and in a very moving Manner warned

warned them not to depart from the LORD as he had done. He desired his Parents and Relations not to mourn for him; for he was assured he was going to possess a Crown of Glory that fades not away. For about *twenty four Hours* before he died, he seemed to be in an *Extasy of Joy*, and so remained till he could speak no longer; and when he was *speechless* he by Signs *desir'd the Company to sing Praise to* GOD; and when they seemed backward, he was the more earnest, and took Dr. WATTS's *Hymns*, and turned them to the *third Hymn* of the *second Book* of *spiritual Songs*, and by Signs urged them to sing, which they did; and he endeavoured to join them as well as he could: and then with Eyes and Hands lift up, *fell asleep*.

The said HYMN is as follows,----

WHY do we mourn departing Friends?
Or shake at Death's Alarms?
'Tis but the Voice that *Jesus* sends.
To call them to his Arms.

Are we not tending upward too
As fast as Time can move?
Nor would we wish the Hours more slow
To keep us from our Love.

Why should we tremble to convey
Their Bodies to the Tomb?
There the dear Flesh of *Jesus* lay,
And left a long Perfume.

The Graves of all his Saints He blest,
And softned every Bed:
Where should the dying Members rest,
But with the dying Head?

Thence He arose, ascending high,
And shew'd our Feet the Way:
Up to the Lord our Flesh shall fly,
At the great Rising Day.

Then let the last loud Trumpet sound,
And bid our Kindred rise;
Awake, ye Nations, under Ground,
Ye Saints, ascend the Skies.

(*The Remainder in our next.*)